

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY VIENTIANE
Annual Program Statement**

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| Program Office: | Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Vientiane |
| Funding Opportunity Title: | 2021 Public Diplomacy Small Grants Program Laos |
| Announcement Type: | Grant or Cooperative Agreement |
| Funding Opportunity Number: | PD-LAO-2021-001 |
| Deadline for Applications: | Various; see section D.4, Submission Dates and Times |
| CFDA Number: | 19.040 |
| Total Amount Available: | Approximately \$80,000 anticipated to be available in each funding cycle, subject to confirmation of availability of funds |
| Amount for Each Award: | Generally up to a maximum of \$20,000 |

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, please contact the Public Diplomacy Grants Officer via email at VientianeSmallGrants@state.gov or phone at +856-21-487-000.

SUMMARY

This document contains detailed instructions and information about the proposal process. Please read it carefully.

All applicants must submit proposals via email to VientianeSmallGrants@state.gov. Activities will only be funded within the Lao PDR. We invite proposals in the \$1,000-\$20,000 range. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane reserves the right to award less or more than the amount of funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as they may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

All grantees must include the following:

1. Three Mandatory Forms: SF424 (for Organizations) **or** SF424I (for Individuals), as well as SF424A and SF424B
2. Grant proposal form and budget detail using our suggested template
3. Your organization's DUNS number

All grantees who have previously received a U.S. Government grant OR are requesting more than \$25,000 must additionally submit:

1. Proof of SAM and NCAGE registration.

Registration for SAM and NCAGE can take up to four weeks. Please plan accordingly, and follow detailed step-by-step instructions within this announcement.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Vientiane Public Diplomacy Section announces an open competition for organizations to submit project proposals for funding under the U.S. Embassy's 2021 Public Diplomacy Small Grants Program.

This Annual Program Statement (APS) solicits proposals for projects that further the U.S. Mission's public diplomacy goals of strengthening people-to-people ties between Laos and the United States, expanding educational opportunities for Lao people to better engage with the United States and ASEAN, and building and strengthening local partners through the specific objectives listed below.

Proposals for projects must focus on one of the priority areas specified below. Applicants should pay close attention to the Public Diplomacy Section's goals, priority program objectives, and target audiences when developing their proposals.

U.S. Public Diplomacy Goals in Lao PDR

Public diplomacy programming includes communicating with international audiences, cultural programming, educational and professional exchanges, promoting education including English language, science, technology and math, and international visitor programs. Proposals funded under this APS will further one or more of the U.S. Mission to Laos' public diplomacy goals: promoting partnerships between Lao and U.S. people and organizations; promoting strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth for Laos through education and market orientation, raising awareness related to health information, good governance, and environmental sustainability; enhancing education ties, strengthening media engagement, and/or building capacity of local partners.

Priority Program Objectives and Target Audiences:

Grant proposals must explicitly address one or more of the Public Diplomacy Section priority objectives listed below and create or extend the communities engaged in those areas:

- Education: English teaching and skills development, improving teaching methods, curriculum development, modernizing education systems, science and technology, soft skills, critical thinking, cooperation among educational institutions, and English skills that can be applied to business, trade, medicine and other fields highlighted in the Public Diplomacy Section's priority program objectives.
- Inclusiveness and support issues related to: disabled persons, LGBT rights, ethnic minorities, other marginalized and stigmatized groups such as victims of human trafficking, underprivileged youth, or religious minorities.

- Promoting fundamental American values: promoting freedom of expression, press, association, and religion through public dialogue and events, cultural performances, and the arts.
- Rule of Law, legal rights education and outreach, and promoting respect for and adherence to international norms and standards.
- Health and wellness: projects to share public information on health issues, promote volunteerism and public support for healthy living, increase cooperation and professional exchange among health-related professionals and organizations in Laos and the United States and ASEAN member countries, and increase awareness among Lao youth and educators about educational needs and professional opportunities related to careers in health and medicine.
- Youth: non-profit activities to help prepare Lao youth for competitive selection into exchange programs and educational opportunities, including academic pursuits as well as extracurricular activities such as sports, art, photography, film, music, dance, debate, speech communications, problem solving, writing, reading, soft skills, critical thinking, computer literacy, computer programming, STEM and test taking skills.
- Women's empowerment: promoting the leadership capabilities, professional development, educational opportunities, mentoring and economic prosperity of women.
- Alumni: strengthening of connections and cooperation among exchange program alumni, building public awareness of alumni efforts to support Lao achievement of the country's sustainable development goals, recruiting new Lao participants for U.S. government educational programs and exchange programs, and expanding projects and activities of alumni that help expand the impact of their U.S.-funded exchange programs.
- Volunteering: promoting volunteerism and the spirit of helping others through community service projects, developing managerial and organizational skills to effectively design and implement volunteer and community service projects, public information and public awareness outreach about volunteering and community service, as well as partnering among individuals, communities and organizations to achieve common goals and build capacity / support for non-profit volunteer activities.
- Entrepreneurship: encouraging entrepreneurship, enhancing essential business skills among Lao youth and underprivileged or marginalized individuals, soft skills, English skills for trade and business. But "seed funding" is not available to setup a business.
- Environment: promoting and supporting the Lower Mekong Initiative, raising awareness and build skills to help address climate change, wildlife trafficking, reducing deforestation and pollution, sustainable development and eco-tourism.
- Cultural Preservation: promoting public awareness and capacity for cultural preservation, preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, capacity building for individuals and organizations to enhance cultural preservation in Laos, and partnering among organizations engaged in cultural preservation, including cross-border partnerships with U.S. organizations and those from other ASEAN member countries.

Activities and expenses that **will not be funded** include, but are not limited to:

- the purchase or long-term lease of space or buildings in support of program activities;
- construction projects;
- for-profit activities;
- individual travel to conferences;
- scholarships to support educational opportunities or study for individuals;
- funding ongoing projects, which would otherwise be funded through other means;
- financial support for fundraising or fund development projects, including for charity;
- projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support with an individual or single party in electoral campaigns;
- political party and lobbying activities;
- projects that support specific religious activities;
- projects that are inherently development in nature, or that primarily consist of procuring equipment or goods that will be given to an organization or individual;
- projects that provide social services, disaster relief services, or development assistance, especially projects typically funded through U.S. Government assistance programs and other non-Public Diplomacy funding;
- projects that primarily support agricultural development;
- cash prizes for competitions;
- networking events;
- alcohol;
- business-class travel;
- translations.

Length of performance period

Projects generally must be completed in one year and include a credible plan for completion within one year, but can be extended in certain circumstances if additional time is required. The Public Diplomacy Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards on a non-competitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

Award Amount

Award Amount will vary between \$1,000 and \$20,000. The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane reserves the right to award less or more than the amount of funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as they may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

Priority Region

Activities will only be funded within the Lao PDR. Geographic diversity within Laos may be considered in the merit review to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors, with preference given to projects that focus the majority of activities outside of Vientiane Capital and Luang Prabang City.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: Maximum 13 months; August 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022

Number of awards anticipated: 3-10 awards, depending on selected proposals

Award amounts: \$1,000 to \$20,000, contingent on funding availability

Total available funding: Approximately \$80,000 anticipated to be available in each funding cycle, subject to confirmation of availability of funds

Amount for Each Award: Generally up to a maximum of \$20,000

Type of Funding: Pending availability of FY2021 funds

Anticipated program start date: August 1, 2021

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: Grant, Fixed Amount Award, or Cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements are different from grants in that embassy staff are more actively involved in grant implementation.

Program Performance Period: Projects generally must be completed in one year or less, but can be longer in certain circumstances. The Public Diplomacy Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards on a non-competitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Submissions are encouraged from U.S. and Lao entities with relevant programming experience, and other foreign entities with relevant programming experience can also apply. This experience should be documented in the proposal. Eligible entities include:

- Not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- Individuals

For-profit entities are **not eligible** to apply. Previous federal award recipients who are not/were not in compliance with the terms of their financial and program reporting requirements are ineligible to apply. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable terms, conditions, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance and requirements. Those organizations found to be in non-compliance may be found ineligible for funding or designated high risk if selected for funding.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Cost sharing is not required.
However, it may be considered in the merit review to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors.

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations. Individuals are not required to have a unique entity identifier or be registered in SAM.gov.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Submit Application Package

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the APS deadline has passed, Embassy staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

Please attach proposals in Microsoft Word or .pdf format to an email with [Project Name] [Funding Notice Number] in the subject line. Proposals should be submitted electronically to VientianeSmallGrants@state.gov no later than **July 15, 2021** (Laos time, GMT+7). For the purposes of determining if a proposal is submitted on time, officials will utilize the time-stamp provided by email.

These deadlines are firm. If organizations fail to meet the deadlines noted above, their application will not be considered for funding and will be considered ineligible. Applicants who fail to meet the deadline will be eligible to reapply in the next annual cycle.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English

- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

Step 1. Mandatory application forms (three mandatory application forms)

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – Organizations) at <https://bit.ly/2OHAzRC> **or** SF-424I (Application for Federal Assistance – Individuals) at <https://bit.ly/2Oy1yyX>
- SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs) at <https://bit.ly/2PgT0xx>
- SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) at <https://bit.ly/2MBMD9O>

Step 2. Summary Page: Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

Step 3. Proposal: Our suggested proposal form can be found on the embassy website: <https://bit.ly/2L1SkJ1>. The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below (7 pages maximum):

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative (approximately three sentences) that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Project Justification / Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed.
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to reaching the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the project be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant?

- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the project beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

Step 4. Budget Justification Narrative: After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate sheet to describe each of the budget expenses in detail at <https://bit.ly/2Bdj89H>. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Justification* on pages 11 and 12, below, for further information.

Step 5. Attachments:

- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, a copy of your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants (except individuals) must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- NCAGE/CAGE code
- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE number and then a DUNS number (these can be completed simultaneously, but we recommend completing NCAGE first, and then use precisely the same details such as organization name and address in the DUNS registration after completing the NCAGE registration)

NCAGE application: Application page here:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>

Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>

For NCAGE help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423

For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

Step 2: After receiving the DUNS number, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

4. Submission Dates and Times

The Public Affairs Section will accept proposals throughout most of the year and will review proposals according to the following schedule. Please note that while the deadlines for submission of applications are firm, all of the review and response dates are approximate and are subject to change, based on availability of funds. All funding decisions are also subject to availability of funds at all times. Any application submitted after **July 15, 2021**, will need to be resubmitted after October 2021 if not selected for funding with FY2021 funds.

- Proposals received from the date when the APS is published on the Embassy website on **May 17, 2021**, will be reviewed by **July 19-23, 2021** with responses going out by **July 26, 2021**.

5. Funding Restrictions

Award funds cannot be used to purchase alcoholic beverages or to engage in for-profit activities.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All application materials must be submitted by email to VientianeSmallGrants@state.gov.

Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Quality and Feasibility of the Project Idea – 25 points: The project idea is well developed, with detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Performance Record on Any Previous Grants – 25 points:

The organization / individual has expertise in their stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and project approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan – 15 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure project success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The project includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

Sustainability – 10 points: Project activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

2. Review and Selection Process

A Grants Review Committee will evaluate all eligible applications.

3. Federal Awardee Performance & Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)

For any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity, if the Federal awarding agency anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold on any Federal award under a notice of funding opportunity may include, over the period of performance (see §200.88 Simplified Acquisition Threshold), this section must also inform applicants:

- i. That the Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);
- ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

iii. That the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Selection will be made and awards will be signed in the end of July 2021.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy / Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy / Department of State.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method: The funds for this grant or cooperative agreement will be disbursed in at least two installments – typically one in the amount of 70% of the total and the second in the amount of 30% of the total.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include:

2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at:

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

Note the U.S. Flag branding and marking requirements in the Standard Terms and Conditions.

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. Financial reporting for the use of the first installment will be required at the time the request for the second installment is made. Financial reporting, through the same method, will again be required at the conclusion of the grant period.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: **Public Diplomacy Grants Officer** in Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Embassy Vientiane at VientianeSmallGrants@state.gov or by phone on +856-21-487-000.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.